

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-04

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FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8744

INFO SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BRUSSELS 00167

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: MASS, CG, BE, FR, US

SUBJECT: COORDINATION OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE FOR ZAIRE

REF: STATE 000251

SUMMARY: EXPLORATORY TALKS WITH BELGIANS ON MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO ZAIRE CONCLUDED JANUARY 6 AFTER FULL DAY OF FRANK DISCUSSION AND MODEST PROGRESS. BELGIANS OBVIOUSLY APPRECIATED REVIVAL OF OLD TRADITION OF MILITARY COORDINATION TALKS BUT WERE CLEARLY CONCERNED THAT U.S. WAS PLANNING MAJOR PROGRAM WITH ONEROUS FINANCIAL SPILL-OVER AND PRESSURE ON BRUSSELS TO RETURN TO MORE ACTIVE EARLY POST-INDEPENDENCE ROLE. BELGIANS ACCORDINGLY WENT OUT OF WAY TO DOWNPLAY THREAT TO ZAIRE AND EMPHASIZE POLITICAL AND FINANCIAL CONSTRIANTS LIMITING ANY SUBSTANTIAL EXPANSION OF THEIR EXISTING MILITARY PROGRAM. THEY WERE VISIBLY RELIEVED AT RELATIVE MODESTY OF U.S. PROGRAM AND SEEMED WILLING TO COOPERATE BY PROVIDING PERTINENT INFORMATION AND EXAMINING HOW THEY MIGHT TAILOR THEIR TRAINING PROGRAMS TO FIT MEEDS FOR INTEGRATED ARMORED CAR CAVALRY SQUADRON. (GROUND FORCE UPGRADE  
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PACKAGE). BELGIANS ARE ALREADY CONSIDERING EXPANSION OF ZAIRE BASED TRAINING PROGRAMS IN SOME AREAS OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO U.S., IN RESPONSE TO XAIRIAN REQUESTS, E.G., COMMUNICATIONS. IN CASE OF TANK AND NAVAL TRAINING, FOR WHICH THEY ARE NOT PREPARED TO SEND INSTRUCTORS TO ZAIRE, THEY ARE ABLE TO CARRY OUT MODEST LEVEL OF TRAINING IN BELGIUM. TO THE EXTENT WE CAN IDENTIFY NEEDS WHICH CAN BE ACCOMMODATED

WITHIN EXISTING MILITARY BUDGET, BELGIANS WILL PROBABLY BE COOPERATIVE. IT IS VERY UNLIKELY, HOWEVER, THAT GOB WOULD BE PREPARED TO ASK ITS PARLIAMENT TO AUTHORIZE ADDITIONAL MONIES FOR MILITARY AID TO ZAIRE DURING CURRENT BEDGET YEAR. GOB OFFERED FULL COOPERATION OF BELGIAN MILITARY REPS IN ZAIRE, INCLUDING PROVISION OF SUCH TRAINING, MANPOWER, AND INFRASTURCTURE STUDIES AS MAY BE AVAILABLE. END SUMMARY.

1. IN JANUARY 5 MEETING WITH U.S. DELEGATION CHIEF, FOREIGN MINISTRY'S CHIEF OF AFRICAN AFFAIRS DIRECTORATE LE BRUN APOLOGIZED FOR FACT DEFENSE MINISTRY RATHER THAN FOREIGN MINISTRY WOULD HOST TALKS, EXPLAINING THIS WAS PATTERN OF EARLIER (1963) CONSULTATIONS AND DECISION HAD BEEN MADE PRIOR TO RECIPT OF DETAILS ABOUT U.S. DELEGATION. IN FACT, WHILE TALKS WERE FORMALLY CHAIRED BY DEFENSE MINISTRY'S CHEF DE BABINET, GENERAL BASTOGNE, IT WAS LE BRUN WHO LED CONVERSATION. DIRECTOR GENERAL VANDEN BLOOCK WAS SENIOR FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL DURING PERIODS WHEN HE WAS PRESENT; FLAMAND-WALLON FRICTION WAS QUITE APPARENT HIS RELATIONS WITH LE BRUN. IN ADDITION, THERE WERE TWO FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS (INCLUDING ZAIRE DESK OFFICER JAENEN) AND FIVE COLONELS FORM THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE.

2. SOME OF DISCUSSION OF POLITICAL ASSUMPTIONS UNDERLYING MILITARY AID PROGRAM (NOTABLY SECURITY THREAT TO ZAIRE) WAS COLORED BY BELGIAN BELIEF THAT U.S. WAS PLANNING VERY LARGE SCALE PROGRAM IN LIGHT OF ANGOLAN  
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DEVELOPMENTS. FROM VARIOUS COMMENTS, IT APPEARED THAT BELGIANS WERE REACTING TO INFORMATION ABOUT U.S. PROGRAM BASED ON ROCKWELL'S ORIGINAL DRAFT PROPOSALS (BEFORE THEY WERE REVISED BY JCS/DOD REVIEW), AND TO OTHER INDICATIONS OF U.S. INTEREST IN OUR EXTENDED BELGIAN MILITARY EFFORT IN ZAIRE. BEFORE HIS PRIVATE MEETING WITH BUCHANAN, LE BRUN SAID HE HAD RECIEVED UNEQUIVOCAL INSTRUCTIONS FROM FOREIGN MINISTER THAT BELGIUM COULD NOT INCREASE ITS MILITARY BUDGET (WHICH INCLUDES COSTS OF TRAINING IN ZAIRE). THESE INSTRUCTIONS ENCOURAGED LE BRUN DURING PLENARY SESSIONS TO PLAY HISNATURAL ROLE AS DEBUNKER OF ZAIRAN CAPABILITY TO DO ANYTHING (LIBERALLY SPRINKLING HIS REMARKS WITH UNFLATTERING ANECDOTES FROM HIS LONG EXPERIENCE IN ZAIRE). HE STESSED RELUCTANCE OF PARLIAMENT TO FUND MILITARY PROGRAMS, PARTICULARLY FOR ZAIRE, NOTING PRESSURE FROM LOBBY OF BELGIANS WHOSE PROPERTY WAS EXPROPRIATED. HE RECALLED SERIES OF BITTER EXPERIENCES WHCIH HAD MADE BELGIANS SHY OF GETTING TOO INVOLVED AGAIN WITH ZAIRE (E.G. BEING KICKED OUT OF KOTONE BASE TO MAKE

WAY FOR NORTH KOREANS, BEING SUPPLANTED BY FRENCH IN ARMOR  
TRAINING, DISAPPEARANCE OF 16 MILITARY ADVISERS  
WITHOUT A TRACE SOME YEARS BACK, ETC.).

3. NOTWITHSTANDING THESE CAUTIONARY NOTES, LE BRUN UNDERScored  
THE CONTINUING IMPORTANCE OF XAIRE TO BELGIUM ON ECONOMIC AND  
SENTIMENTAL GROUNDS, THEY KEY ROLE WHICH LARGE  
BELGIAN COMPANIES STILL PLAYED THERE, ETC. VANDEN BLOOCK  
INDICATED PRIVATELY THAT BELGIAN RETICENSE SHOULD NOT BE  
MISUNDERSTOOD AND HE IMPLIED THAT BELGIUM COULD BE PUSHED TO  
DO MORE THAT IT WAS NOW PREPARED TO OFFER. SIMLARLY, DURING  
PLENARY SESSIONS GENERAL BASTOGNE CONVEYED IMPRESSION DEFENSE  
MINISTRY COULD BE PERSUADED TO SUPPORT SLIGHTLY LARGER PROGRAM,  
EVEN THOUGH HE WAS NOT PREPARED TO GO INTO MUCH DETAIL NOW.

4. GENERAL BASTOGNE WAS VERY EMPHATIC THAT BELGIANS WOULD NOT  
RETURN TO DIRECT COMMAND ROLE (ENCADREMENT) EVEN IN UNLIKELY  
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EVENT THEY WERE ASKED BY ZAIRIANS TO DO SO. HE STRESSED THAT,  
UNLIKE 1963, ZAIRE IS NO LONGER PREPARED TO ACCEPT ADVICE  
ON HOW THEY SHOULD HANDLE THEIR MILITARY RESOURCES. BELGIANS  
SEE THEIR ROLE AS THAT OF "TEACHING THE TEACHERS". IN THIS  
CONNECTION, BASTOGNE SAID THERE WERE TEN STAFF OFFICERS  
TEACHING BASIC COMBAT TACTICS AT THE CENTRE SUPERIEURE  
MILITAIRE STAFF COLLEGE IN KINSHASA. SEVENTEEN OFFICERS AND NINE  
NCO'S ARE TEACHING COMPANY LEVEL TACTICS AT THE CENTRE DE  
FORMATION DES OFFICIERS AT KINANGA, AND THE BALANCE OF THE  
60-ODD BELGIANS ARE TEACHING YOUNG NCOS AND JUNIOR OFFICERS  
BASIC PLATOON AND COMPANY-LEVEL TACTICS AT BRANCH SERVICE  
SCHOOLS FOR INFANTRY, ARTILLERY, ORDNANCE, ENGINEERING,  
TRANSPORTATION AND SIGNAL COMMUNICATIONS.

5. ON KEY ISSUE OF TRAINING OF ARMOR OFFICERS, BASTOGNE  
RECALLED THAT BELGIANS HAD BEEN SUPPLANTED IN ZAIRE BY BRITISH  
WHO WERE OUSTED, IN TURN, TO MAKE WAY FOR FRENCH. ZAIRE HAD  
NOT ASKED BELGIUM TO RESUME IN-COUNTRY ARMOR TRAINING PROGRAM  
AND BELGIUM WAS UNLIKELY TO DO SO. BELGIANS WERE NOW EXAMINING  
ZAIRIAN REQUEST FOR SOME INCREASE IN TRAINING IN AREA OF  
COMMUNICATIONS BUT DEFENSE MINISTRY'S BUDGET HAD VERY LITTLE  
FLEXIBILITY. IT EMERGED, HOWEVER,  
THAT FOR COSMETIC REASONS MILITARY TRAINING OF FOREIGN  
OFFICERS IN BELGIUM IS FUNDED BY FOREIGN MINISTRY RATHER  
THAN FUNDS ALLOCATED TO COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT  
(BUT SILL ADMINISTERED BY DEFENSE MINISTRY).

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BRUSSELS 00167

LIMDIS

IT IS UNDER THIS BUDGET THAT FIVE ZAIRIAN OFFICERS WILL BEGIN RECONNAISSANCE TRAINING AT ARMOR SCHOOL AT STOCKET LATER THIS MONTH, I.E., IDEAL TRAINING FOR ARMORED CAVALRY. BELGIUM WAS ALSO UNWILLING TO TRAIN ZAIRIAN NAVAL OFFICERS IN-COUNTRY, BUT TOLD KINSHASA THAT IT COULD ACCEPT TWO OR THREE OFFICERS FOR NAVAL TRAINING IN BELGIUM. BASTOGNE WAS ADAMANT IN SAYING THAT NO BELGIAN AIR FORCE OFFICER WOULD AGREE TO SERVE AS PILOT INSTRUCTOR IN ZAIRE. BELGIAN DELEGATION DISCLAIMED ALL KNOWLEDGE OF RETIRED BELGIAN OFFICERS TRAINING ZAIRIANS ON RECENTLY ACQUIRED CESSNAS. IT WAS RECALLED, HOWEVER, THAT ZAIRIANS HAD MADE GENERALLY UNSUCCESSFUL EFFORT TO RECRUIT FORMER BELGIAN OFFICERS IN BELGIUM, AND THIS COULD BE THE SOURCE OF OFFICERS IN QUESTION. IN PRIVATE CONVERSATION, LE BRUN SAID BELGIUM MIGHT AGREE TO TRAIN TWO OR THREE AIR FORCE OFFICERS IN BELGIUM. THIS WOULD DEPEND SOMEWHAT ON TYPE OF TRAINING DESIRED.

6. BELGIANS MADE NO PRETENSE OF HIDING THEIR IRRITATION AT FRENCH ROLE IN MILITARY AID TO ZAIRE. THEY DESCRIBED IT AS ESSENTIALLY A COVER FOR SALE OF MIRAGES PLANES AND PANHARD ARMORED CARS TO ZAIRE, PROVIDING "SERVICE AFTER  
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SALE" MINIMAL TRAINING NECESSARY TO RUN THE EQUIPMENT. BELGIANS OBVIOUSLY THOUGHT IT WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA TO GET THE FRENCH TO REBUILD KAMINA AIRBASE FOR THEIR MIRAGES BUT DOUBTED WE COULD PERSUADE THEM.

7. ON THE QUESTION OF INFRASTRUCTURE, LE BRUN SAID THAY THE ONLY DEVELOPED BASES ARE THOSE AT KAMINA AND KITONA. BUT KAMINA HAS BEEN PLUNDERED SO THOROUGHLY IT "LOOKS AS THOUGH IT HAD BEEN BOMBED." IT WILL BE NECESSARY, THEREFORE, TO CONSTRUCT E.G. HARD STANDS FOR TANK MAINTENANCE IN THE SHABA. BELGIANS ARE NOT INVOLVED AT ALL, GENERAL BASTOGNE CLAIMED, IN THE MAINTENANCE OR DEVELOPMENT OF MILITARY INFRASTRUCTURE IN ZAIRE. WE SHOULD, ACCORDINGLY, ADDRESS OURSELVES TO THE ZAIRIANS. BELGIANS COULD PROVIDE US WITH SOME OLD SURVEYS OF CAMPS AND BASES IN THE SHABA, ALTHOUGH THEY WOULD ALL PROBABLY BE OUTDATED.

8. GEN. BASTOGNE ADVISED U.S. TO DEAL DIRECTLY WITH COL. BLEUS, HEAD OF BELGIAN'S MILITARY MISSION IN KINSHASA FOR ALL INFORMATION ON BELGIAN PROGRAMS IN ZAIRE AND EXPERIENCE IN WORKING WITH THE ZAIRIANS. HE URGED US TO CONSULT WITH BLEUS BEFORE FINALIZING OUR OWN PLANS BECAUSE OF HIS LENGTHY EXPERIENCE IN XAIRE. HE SAID HE WOULD INFORM BLEUS ABOUT OUR DISCUSSIONS AND INSTRUCT HIM TO COOPERATE FULLY WITH US. MEANWHILE BASTOGNE AGREED TO PROVIDE US WITH A LIST OF ALL ZAIRIAN OFFICERS WHO HAVE RECEIVED ARMOR TRAINING AT STOCKEL, WITH SOME INDICATION OF THEIR RELATIVE MERIT.

9. IT WAS AGREED THAT WE SHOULD INFORM GOZ THAT WE HELD BILATERAL TALKS IN AN EFFORT TO COORDINATE OUR ACTIONS FOR BENEFIT OF ZAIRE AND TO AVOID DUPLICATION IN MILITARY ASSISTANCE. LE BRUN WAS CONCERNED THAT ZAIRE MIGHT ASK TO PARTICIPATE IN ANY FUTURE TALKS, AS IT HAD ON EARLIER OCCASION OF US-BELGIAN DISCUSSIONS. HE ADDED THAT WE WOULD NOT BE DOING BELGIUM A FAVOR IF WE ENCOURAGED ZAIRE TO APPROACH IT WITH CONFIDENTIAL

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REQUEST E.G. TO ORGANIZE ARMOR TRAINING IN ZAIRE. WHILE LE BRUN WISHED TO DISCLOSE MINIMUM OF DETAILS, HE TACITLY AGREED WE COULD SAY THAT DISCUSSION FOCUSSED ON NATURE AND EXTENT OF BELGIAN TRAINING PROGRAMS, IN CONTEXT OF THE UPCOMING U.S. MANPOWER SURVEY.

10. COMMENT: EMBASSY POLITICAL COUNSELOR WHO SAT IN ON TALS CONFIRMED DELEGATION'S IMPRESSION THAT THERE IS SOME GIVE IN THE BELGIAN POSITION BUT THAT FOREIGN MINISTRY IS NOT PREPARED TO GO TO PARLIAMENT WITH A REQUEST TO EXPAND THE MILITARY PROGRAM FOR ZAIRE. LE BRUN DECLARED DRAMATICALLY TO UNDERScore THIS POINT, THAT IT WOULD END HIS CAREER ("AND I AM NO KAMIKAZA"), IF HE WERE TO PROPOSE AN ENLARGED MILITARY PROGRAM. FOR THE MOMENT, WE DO NOT KNOW WHETHER THE TRAINING SCHOOLS IN ZAIRE AND BELGIUM CAN TURN OUT A SUFFICIENT NUMBER OF OFFICERS

IN THE CATEGORIES OF INTEREST TO US WITHOUT AN INCREASE IN  
TEACHING STAFF. TO THE EXTENT THAT ZAMISH OR OUR SURVEY  
NEXT SPRING MAY IDENTIFY A LIMITED NUMBER OF NEEDED ADDITIONAL  
TRAINING SLOTS, BELGIUM WILL PROBABLY MAKE AN EFFORT TO ACCOMMODATE  
OUR NEEDS. CONCEIVABLY WE CAN AFFECT SHAPE OF NEXT YEAR'S  
MILITARY BUDGET BY THE RESULTS OF OUR SURVEY. BUT PRRESENT  
BELGIAN GOVERNMENT IS TOO INSECURE TO BE WILLING TO TAKE  
ON SOCIALISTS IN PARLIAMENT WHO FAVOR A CUTBACK IN MILITARY  
BUDGET.

11. THIS IS JOINT STATE-DEFENSE MESSAGE.FIRESTONE

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## Message Attributes

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